



Department of Conservation and Recreation  
Stewardship Council Meeting  
January 4, 2008  
Borderland, Sharon/Easton, Ma

Meeting Minutes

*Stewardship Councilors in Attendance:* Councilors, Julian Agyeman, Christina Crowley, John Natoli, Laura Johnson, Michael Dutton, Henry Lee and Dan Wolf.

*Public Attendees:* Paul A. Remington, New England Trail Riders Association; Jill A. Miller, Natick Bike and Pedestrian Advisory Committee; A. Richard Miller, Cochituate State Park Advisory Committee; Claudia Hurley, Friends of Robinson State Park; Steve Kaiser, Association of Cambridge Neighborhood; Carol Gilmour, Friends of Robinson State Park; Mike Ryan, Friends of the Fells; James McCaffrey, Sierra Club; Craig Della Penna, Massachusetts Bike and Pedestrian Advisory Board; Neil Noveletsky, Borderland Advisory Council; Jean Santos, Borderland Advisory Board; Judy Jacobs, Friends of Blue Hills; John Ventregco, Friends of Borderland; Heidi Ricci, Mass Audubon; Renata Von Tscharr, Charles River Conservancy; Nicole Brown, Charles River Conservancy; Oakes Plimpton, Friends of Borderland; Bill Hocking, Borderland Advisory Council; and Laida Tracey-Clifta, Friends of Borderland.

*DCR Staff in Attendance:* Commissioner Rick Sullivan, Stephanie Cooper, Jeff Daley, Leslie Luchonek, Marianne Fleckner, Suzanne Wilson, Gary Briere, Gary Davis, Renee Tavares, Ellen Yahrmart, Susan Hamilton, Marcelle Valentin, and Joe Rotondo.

I. **Call To Order ( 1:15 p.m.), Councilor Henry Lee**

- a. Councilor Lee interim Chair for the 01/4/2008 meeting. He mentioned that this will be the most interesting years in comparison to prior years and there are many great initiatives and challenges that come along with them. Introduced Commissioner Sullivan.

II. **Commissioner's Report, Commissioner Rick Sullivan**

- a. Introduced and recognized Ellenor Yahrmart, Park Supervisor; Linda Tracy Plimpton, President of the Borderland State Park Friends Group and Bill Hawkins, President of the Borderland Advisory Council and the other members. Introduced special guest Oaks Plimpton grandson of Oakes and Blanche Ames. The Ames family was the architect and owners of the property, the Commissioner gave a history of the Ames mansion, thanked all for being here.
- b. Commissioner Sullivan stated that the Stewardship will be getting a weekly report, highlights, thanked operations and engineering for response to Everett explosion, specifically Bob Gearhart. Mr. Gearhart responded to the Everett's explosion because it was on a DCR roadway and Commissioner Sullivan wanted to give recognition on their great response within the 24 hours rehabilitated and paved roadways with contractors, shows the pride and dedication of the staff.
- c. In regards to snow events Commissioner Sullivan said Sam Overton and Jack Murray are working together to keep up with the snow removal and emergency management, snow and ice. Recognized four employees at Quabbin for saving the life of a young girl in a boating accident, sister agencies recognizing them as well
- d. Christmas holidays season highlight, an event at Breakheart prepared a dinner appreciation at Fells for the Friends groups, about eight additional friends groups from other parks, it was great way of a building of relationships.
- e. Introduced a new staff member Gary Davis, General Counsel.

- f. Informed that it has been publicly announced that the mounted unit is being brought back to the Blue Hills and we will be working to place mounted units across the Commonwealth. There will be three horses at Blue Hills and the mounted unit should be done by this spring.
- g. Plymouth Rock notice to proceed, will be under construction for next four months and be renovated for the tourist season.
- h. Fitchburg Dam issue was caught early, great emergency management, leak in water pipe between the reservoirs, caught early and a great job done by Mike Misslin and everyone at Office Dam Safety
- i. First Day Hikes - conducted first 13 hikes, largest in Blue Hills 700 participated, the program will continue, getting people involved with nature, looking forward to passport program and getting children outside, programs will continue to grow. Commissioner Sullivan gave special thanks to Joe Rotondo and Special Events, and mentioned Joe's win of the Christmas holiday decoration contest.

Councilor Henry Lee asked about the membership recruitment for the three vacancies of the council. Commissioner Sullivan responded that one resume of application from the western part of state was received, which is going to the Secretary then to Governor. We are currently looking to still fill other two vacancies, the goal to fill as soon as possible.

### III. **Committee Updates and Meeting Schedules**

#### **a. Finance Committee**

##### **i. 5 Year Bond Bill Overview – *Marianne Fleckner, Director of Administration & Finance***

- i. Discussed the Governor's Environmental Bond Bill that was filed on December 1, 2007, in summary \$738.5 m for conservation & recreation in collaboration of language with Commissioner and Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) and other areas of agency, including the Stewardship Council finance committee. The line items, which detail the recreational facilities, cultural resources, land acquisitions, bridges, and roadways running up to \$ 413m are part of the 5 year bond bill deals with the facilities and projects, remainder \$325m in the 3 year bond bill deals with parkways and bridges. RMP appropriation, Resource Management Planning and Capitol Improvement Plan placed and thrilled at submission at \$238.5m.
- ii. Councilor Wolf gave appreciation of Marianne Fleckner working on the project.
- iii. Councilor Lee asked what happens now. Marianne said Governor submits bill, goes to House, Senate then to Conference then to the Executive Administration & Finance to the WAYS and MEANS Senate, then back to the Governor. Councilor Lee asked if there is a ceiling on the bond authority. Marianne Fleckner said administration is dealing with a deficit, basically same process for the general fund, don't know how far can be stretched. Councilor Lee asked, as capital item, can it be used to hire staff as well as project work? Marianne said yes because language was written in to allow, but for staff working on capital projects, 30% of salary are fringe benefits, so cost of hire is actually higher than salary. Councilor Johnson stated that the Environmental Bond Bill needs our support and urged attendees to call their legislatures. Councilor Johnson said once the authority goes through then the debate of appropriation what happens then to the Resource Management Plan. Commissioner Sullivan said all items that they did exercise where the RMP which was included in the language and

that it is a priority. Stewardship bond is for the properties, stewards of the commonwealth. Councilor Dutton said the Stewardship Council has taken a strong stand on the RMP to get funds on the operational side, not just the capital. Councilor Lee mentioned how this process is a long haul and how the Stewardship Council can be most helpful. Councilor Whitney Hatch mentioned that he has been lobbying, sending formal letters and calling the Representatives and Senators. Feedback from Legislators reports their open for conversation. Commissioner Sullivan urged the Stewardship Council to call legislators. Councilor Wolf said the council should get together in a subsequent meeting and have discussion on how they can be influential on getting the bond bills through, want to be supportive of Commissioner and DCR staff.

**b. Policy Committee, Julian & Laura**

- i. Councilor Agyeman commended Gary Briere on his managing the OHV committee and the consensus of the bond bills. One of his students is working on a research on high tech system to monitor OHV use in restricted areas, she will present at the next council meeting.
- ii. Parkways and Gap analysis mention from Councilor Lee.

**c. Resource Management Plan Committee, Henry Lee**

- i. Mount Watatic Reservation RMP Presentation, *Andy Backman*
  - i. Introduced Regional Director, Susan Hamilton. He presented a PowerPoint of Mt Watatic Reservation, gave brief presentation describing the partnership, RMP process, defining values & management challenges. Funding effort stimulated by development and communication base at summit, raised \$900,000 by Ashburnham Conservation trust, 1/3 of total price, Ashby land trust. Partially funded by the Land and Water Conservation Fund. All six owners participated in resource management process, local fundraisers installed a monument just below summit and near base listing contributors and partners. Interesting ownership division, Dept. Fish and Game 49% ownership interest, DCR 49%, towns and land trusts with 5% interest each, about 1.5 acres, but undivided interest, not specific parceling, in the property. Overview of public meetings and oblique overview done by Dave Kimball, can see the current construction as a scar on the mountain, summit road improved greatly, point of contention however, some partners wanted deconstructed, but local law enforcement and field staff see as important management tool, helps with search and rescue. He showed a map of given subject property and management areas outlined DCR's recent acquisitions and conservation restrictions, and municipal lands. Important for continuity of conservation, includes mid-state trail. Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program recognized as one of best places to watch annual hawk migration. Visitor's survey plots use in fall 2004. Some private property, owner is conservation minded, contributed 1/3 of \$900,000 himself. Partners recognize that DCR is the only one managing on site, work towards managing by consensus, and he listed the challenges and responsibilities, Pearl Hill Rec. Area and Willard Brook very popular, can only focus on Mt. Watatic management 5% of the time, they are under staffed. Erosion and trail management is a challenge, entrance to summit devoid of ground cover, high use. Notes distilled from many meetings with management committee, but already discussed largely during proceeding acquisition meetings. Hope to pass

future stewardship by forming Watatic Stewardship Committee, similar in structure to Watatic Resource Management Committee; consider possibility for funding and general guidance. Moving towards enhanced law enforcement, boon for surrounding properties as well. Fish and Game will be important partner, in monitoring public access and resource protection, and will be managers of snowmobile use. He introduced the staff that does the on site management for Mount Watatic and Dennis McNamara for Fish & Game who was a great facilitator and representative on RMP. Asked for approval for the RMP plan.

- ii. Councilor Natoli asked about the biggest challenges. Andy said the partnership, towns and land trusts, and two state dept. have different mandates, challenging and interesting to come to consensus, but was able to nonetheless. Leslie Luchonok mentioned the importance to protect this parcel and having this acquisition go through, congratulated Andy on moving coalition along. Andy said will be reviewing the recommendations yearly, hopefully through Mt. Watatic Stewardship Council. Inquiry if there any friends group members involved? Only one friend group, potentially partner from Willard Brook friends. RMP subcommittee reviewed report, Councilor Lee said even though many challenges he took note that it is a beautiful natural parcel 30 minutes from a beautiful mountain and increasing visitor count at Mount Watatic region area. Problems with OHV prime area and enforcement issues will increase, but RMP very will put together.
  - iii. Stewardship Council are all in favor, Councilor Agyeman 1<sup>st</sup> it, Councilor Natoli second.
  - iv. Councilor Natoli asked the amount of people to monitor the RMPs. Councilor Lee said plans lay out existing resources, those needed to baseline carry out plan, and those optimal. DCR has been good at articulating, but limited by funding, etc. as far as execution of plan.
- ii. Mount Watatic Reservation RMP Approval Request
- i. All in favor

IV. **Off-Highway Vehicle Enforcement Group Update, Bureau Chief Recreation, Gary Briere**

- a. Gary Briere said at point of high activity with working group, feedback from working group has been shared with Chairman Dick Cross, concerning discussion of penalties, funding for enforcement, hoping for change in statutes and legislation. Moving forward will be difficult. In February, will arrive a consensus from the group and Gary Briere will present at the next meeting a more detailed view of the recommendations and consensuses.
- b. Councilor Agyeman asked for the council to list some details addressed by the committee of the issues of great significance which can be sent to the legislatures. Gary Briere said great strides with group, for example agreed upon to move up the penalty cost \$50 to \$5,000 penalties for OHV transgression, mentioned how some of the groups have been incredibly helpful, members such as Heidi Ricci and Sharl Heller from friends groups including state police. Heidi Ricci thanked Gary Briere and Bob O'Connor and facilitators, said were able to conduct a quantitative analysis of scope of problem in comparison to enforcement, about getting opportunities of collaborative areas, such as forestry management planning: has conducted an analysis of OHV damage in the forest and heavy impact areas, data gathered in one area overlaps other efforts at policy level. Councilor Lee said as move forward important to seek out data, created for other

capacity, but can be used by use. Helpful to pull data from other resources. Important to step back and look how far this discussion has come, congratulations.

- c. Councilor Agyeman said we need a central area for data at DCR, instead of divided holdings, Councilor Lee said, yes important to know what we have and what we need, Commissioner Sullivan echoed these sentiments, the need for access to utilize effectively.
- d. Comment on noise level measurement, parameters, individual offered services for measuring noise disturbance, delayed to open floor period of meeting

V. **Approval of Minutes from October 4, 2007**

- a. All in favor, with corrections

VI. **Public Comment**

- a. **Dick Miller** from the Cochituate State Park Advisory Committee discussed Lake Cochituate. He stated the stress from development and urban activities coming closer and closer, all problems to fundamental issues, discussed rapid response, missed opportunities on behalf of DCR and partnering, grateful for adding partnership this year, thanks to Commissioner. PowerPoint presentation given showing the lake, one of the major recreational lakes in Commonwealth. Cochituate Rail Trail can be seen, along with Natick Mall, largest mall in New England, existing railroad curve line, new buildings, rail trail through major shopping area and state park, connecting two towns, Boston Scientific is in area, noted many of the construction project, such as new high rises which block the aesthetic experience of the state park, 40B zoning says they can build anyway they wish. He asked that the friends groups and DCR make a stand on the high rises near their parks. Language went to legislature about this issue and the impact to the state parks. The letter has been submitted and working as a team and on rapid response. Discussed solar bees.
- b. **Dick Miller** spoke on behalf of Craig Della Penna in regards to rail trail, Massachusetts Central Rail Trail, wayside trail in Wayland and Sudbury, assertion that attorney at DCR holding up development. Distributed copy of letter asserting MBTA would pay for cost in event of taking back for transportation purposes. Commissioner Sullivan noted meeting scheduled with Dan Dowbroski from MBTA.
- c. **Judy Jacobs** with friends of Blue Hills, notifying of Lantana land swap, making sure everyone was aware of the threat to the state park. Lantana function hall, outlined problems cited by Lantana, patrons leaving from area has been hit by vehicles, spoke with Senator Joyce, legislation was passed giving Lantana the right to purchase the abutting property to protect people from the dangerous intersection, also purchased land on Rt. 24. He intends to swap land with abutting property. MEPA process said was happy Secretary Bowles put in for environmental impact.
- d. **Heidi Ricci** from Mass Audubon wanted to thank the Stewardship Council and Commissioner for their work and sees great response in how the friends groups support one another and communicates. On the RMP report pleased with the Forestry Cutting plan policy, says should take another look on ecological management and, if there is a plan B, there are opportunities to partner with friends & partners for efforts in training or promoting getting projects done.
- e. **Renata Von Tschan** Charles River Conservancy said bike path is coming along, said historic parkways will be part of DCR training of maintenance if there is a transfer. Inquired if a Stewardship Council meeting can be held there.

- f. **Bill Hocking** of Borderland Advisory Council discussed the Blue Hill acquisition, noted that almost lost and said how important it is for friend/partner groups to be able to advocate and comment to help DCR lands, asked Stewardship Council to give a policy to alert friends groups of these acquisitions state wide.
- g. **Oakes Plimpton** Friends of Borderland said there is a yahoo account for comments for Friends and Partners. Heidi Ricci said there is a group building from Mike Ryan and Sharl Hellar to help with Borderland, which answered Oakes question.
- h. **Mike Ryan** Friends of the Fells asked best location for Stewardship Council meeting. On the OHV working group, says has a lot to do with Stewardship Council group, read final draft of the working group, read off one of the lines of draft regarding the charges but feels the capacity to proceed with enforcement has not been addressed but worries that will be a problem, how will the enforcement will be created when it is not there now. Looking for next month's report. Mentioned parkway issue and Environmental Bond Bill talks about repairing bridges, but not parkways, there is a threat to parkways will go to Mass Highway, noted a discrepancy. Commissioner Sullivan said there will be changes to the transportation bond bill, mentioned 70-11 to talk about parkways separately from bridges on 70-10 and said change must occur in the legislature. Heidi Ricci commented on protection of task to help with adaptation and asked to tweak language. Commissioner Sullivan responded that there is no intention to remove any bridges from the MEPA process. Dan asked if the Stewardship Council and friends will know first regarding the bridges or parkway transfers. Commissioner Sullivan said they would know first. Councilor Wolf said metrics needed regarding cost. Councilor Laura Johnson said policy committee will be meeting Gary regarding the ORV policy.
- i. **Steve Kaiser** of the Association of Cambridge Neighborhood discussed Environmental Bond Bill said everyone got blindsided, but did say the language was very good and is glad that first line of the language will be removed. Said advisory committee has not met in months. Noted on Lantana said excellent job working with MEPA from Secretary & agency. Fall River lands and snow mobiles, OHVs discussed.
- j. **James McCaffrey** of the Sierra Club discussed the swap and said that the Blue Hills help to prevent this happening future article 37 bill and would like assistance, which will stop at the acquisitions of swaps and would like to work with DCR on this bill.

VII. **Meeting Schedule** – Next meeting will be Friday, February 1, 2008 at Lynn Museum and Historical Society Center.

*Meeting adjourned 3:15 pm*